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ABSTRACT

In 1984-85, a cooperative project was undertaken in New York to address the issue of minority access to those professions that can be entered through two-year college programs (e.g., animal health technology, certified shorthand reporting, dental hygienist, land surveying, and physical therapist assistant). Project activities were guided by a central steering committee and five regional steering committees. Anticipated outcomes of the project were: increased awareness of Regents of the State of New York's goals and activities relating to the problem of minority access to the professions; increased commitment at local levels to undertake activities to increase access to two-year college programs; identification of activities that are feasible for local educators and professionals to undertake; and identification of useful and feasible state-level actions to address the problem. The major activity undertaken to achieve project outcomes was a series of five regional conferences, which involved educators, professionals, and community agency personnel. At the heart of the conferences were small group discussions which generated recommendations for action in the following areas: career awareness, attitudes, academic performance, institutional responsibilities, community resources, and state policies and practices. Across regions many recommendations had a similarity of response to certain generally perceived needs (e.g., the need for more accurate and effective career information and materials, and the need for more active involvement of minority educators and professionals as role models). The project report provides summary statements of recommendations developed in the small group sessions, as well as a discussion of their implications. (AYC)

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SUMMARY OF REGIONAL CONFERENCES

INCREASING MINORITY ACCESS TO THE LICENSED PROFESSIONS THROUGH TWO-YEAR COLLEGE PROGRAMS

Two-Year College Development Center
State University of New York at Albany
in cooperation with
Bureau of Grants Administration
New York State Education Department

JC 860 158

December 1985
(VEA 53-85-325-0374)

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Capital District:
William Chalmers; Capital District Educational Opportunity Center
Virginia Morales DiPasquale; New York State Department of Health
Willie A. Hammett; Hudson Valley Community College
R. Winifred Johnson; Alvarado Associates, Inc.
Lindalisa Norville; Albany High School

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John Blasi, Barbara Davis, Elana Levy; Onondaga Community College
Carson Carr; LeMoyne College
Bessie Edge; Fowler High School
Robert Giambattista; Onondaga-Madison BOCES
Joanne Stephens; Syracuse Educational Opportunity Center

Long Island:
Margarita Ayala, Marie Petersen; Farmingdale Agricultural and Technical College
Rose Furcron-Harris; Nassau Community College
Alice Blanch, Joanne Braxton, Norman Daniels, M. Cecile Forte; Suffolk County Community College
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Wilhelmina Glanville; Borough of Manhattan Community College
Emile Roberts; CUNY Central Administration
John Staton; National Association for the Advancement of Black Americans in Vocational Education

Western New York:
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William Bennett; Buffalo City School District
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Clifford Crooks; Erie BOCES #1
Arthur Eve; Assemblyman, 141st District
Roscoe Brown; President, Bronx Community College

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Gene M. Winter & LaVerna M. Fadale, Project Co-Directors
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INTRODUCTION

The Regents of the State of New York have long been committed to educational access for all regardless of race, color or creed. Recently a special emphasis has been placed on increasing access of minorities to the licensed professions. Severe underrepresentation of minorities in these professions has resulted in several actions by the Regents to address the problem: Regents/Commissioner's Regional Conferences (1980-81) addressing the issue drew over 1,500 participants; an invitational conference of 150 representatives of professions, secondary schools and colleges reviewed steps to increase access (1981); the position of Minority Professional Education Coordinator was created (1982) within the Office of the Professions.

In 1984, the issue was delineated in a Regents position paper, **Increasing Minority Access to the Licensed Professions.** The problem was defined in terms of the following components:

- Limited **awareness** of professional career options among minority students.
- Inadequate **counseling** at stages of education when critical decisions are made.
- Lack of **aspiration** resulting from the above two failings, language difficulties and self-image problems.
- **Low expectations** of minority children, contributing to poor self-image, lower aspirations, and lower achievement levels.
- Inadequate training in **fundamental skills** -- especially math, science, and English.
- Insufficient opportunities for **special help,** tutoring, and remediation.
- Inflexible or insensitive **admissions** procedures in professional programs.
- Inadequate steps to promote **retention** through planning and provision for special help during high school and professional study.
- Lack of adequate **funding** to implement programs aimed at increasing minority participation.
- Lack of **institutional commitment** to affirmative action.

In addition, the paper included suggested activities for elementary, secondary, undergraduate and graduate levels, and suggestions for cooperative efforts with community-based organizations, professional boards/associations, parent groups and private industry.

In 1984-85 a cooperative project was undertaken with support from Vocational Education Act funds to address access of minorities to those professions that could be entered through two-year college programs. The Two-Year College Development Center, State University of New York at Albany, and the Bureau of Grants Administration, New York State Education Department, carried out the project with the cooperation of the Office of the Professions, State Education Department. Among the licensed professions targeted in this project were Animal Health Technology, Certified Shorthand Reporting, Dental Hygienist, Land Surveying, Practical Nursing, Occupational Therapy Assistant, Ophthalmic Dispensing, Physical Therapist Assistant, Physician's Assistant, Registered Nursing and Specialist's Assistant.

Project activities were guided by a Central Steering Committee comprised of staff from the Bureau of Grants Administration, Office of the Professions and project staff. The state was divided into five regions (Western, Central, Capital District, Metropolitan New York and Long Island) based on population, number of two-year institutions and geography. Within each region a local steering committee was formed to work with project staff to design and implement a conference and subsequently to serve as a planning/coordinating group at the regional level. In order to encourage involvement, the make-up of the committee consisted of minority professionals and personnel from secondary and postsecondary agencies, community groups, and state agencies.

Anticipated outcomes of the project were set as:

- increased awareness of Regents' goals and activities relating to the problem of minority access to the professions
- increased commitment at local levels to undertake activities to increase access to two-year college programs leading to licensure
- identification of activities that are feasible for local educators and profession members to undertake
- identification of state-level actions seen to be useful and feasible in addressing the problem of minority access to these professions

REGIONAL CONFERENCES

The major activity undertaken to achieve project outcomes was a series of five regional conferences. These one-day conferences sought to involve educators, professionals and community agency personnel in a cooperative effort designed to explore solutions to the problem. Activities were aimed at developing a consensus on regional/local action plans and recommendations for state-level policies and actions.

Each of the five regional conferences followed a similar format: introductory speakers, an address by a policy level official from the Office for Higher and Professional Education and a panel discussion moderated by a member of the Bureau of Grants Administration. The panelists set the stage for the small group work that followed by speaking to the issues from the point of view of an educator, a professional in the field or representative of a minority group of the region.

The small discussion groups were the heart of the conferences as they generated the recommendations for action in response to topics and issues identified by the planning committee in each region. The locally selected issues generally reflected the problem components as set forth in the Regents position paper. A summary of the topics from the five conferences is listed below.

- Attitudes/Expectations of Students, Staff, Parents, Professionals
- Career Information, Awareness of Alternatives/Opportunities
- Recruitment Policies and Practices
- Academic Preparation/Retention
- Changing Student Clientele/Needs
- Increasing Visibility of Role Models
- Financing Access to Educational Programs
- Placement Opportunities
- College Procedures and Practices
- State-Level Policies and Practices

The structure of each group, designed to facilitate discussion and exchange, included a facilitator, resource persons and a recorder. An exchange and discussion of outcomes among groups took place in a plenary session. The closing activity consisted of presentation(s) by State Education Department and project staff designed to provide future directions for the regional participants.

Subsequent to each conference, outcomes of the group discussions were published and disseminated as Regional Conference Proceedings. These proceedings serve as the basis for ongoing activities led by the local committee members who originally participated in the planning of the conferences.

The balance of this document summarizes the outcomes of the five regional conferences in terms of activities and strategies recommended for local, regional and state-level consideration to further the goal of increasing access of minorities to the licensed professions in New York State. The recommendations, while not directed at any single profession, are generally focused on two-year college programs as routes to the licensed professions.

SUMMARY OF SMALL GROUP OUTCOMES

The efforts of the over 400 individuals who participated in the five one-day sessions resulted in numerous recommendations. Exact wording of topics and strategies differed from region to region but the general sense of many recommendations often paralleled one another. A summary of the outcomes of the group discussions is presented in this section organized by six categories:

Career awareness - Many of the recommended activities were directed at increasing student knowledge of occupational information, career alternatives and educational program opportunities.

Attitudes - A number of recommended activities were focused on developing student self-awareness, aspirations, and improving staff attitudes and sensitivity to minority group needs.

Academic performance - Numerous suggestions addressed increasing student competence in specific subjects such as math and science as well as general development of academic skills that would increase persistence and better prepare students for professional programs.

Institutions - A number of recommendations were directed at what institutions and agencies should be doing. While there may be some overlap with other categories, the recommendations included in this category appear to require institutional decisions.

Community - The recommendations in this category are those directed at involving or working with human and material resources in the community rather than within a single institution or agency.

State - Each regional conference specifically requested recommendations for policies or practices that could be addressed at the state level.

CAREER AWARENESS

- Develop audio/visual materials to disseminate career information about the professions and programs that are routes to the licensed professions
- Increase use of career days and include licensed professionals as presenters
- Increase use of field trips, fairs, speakers and other career educational activities
- Develop Speakers Bureaus comprised of licensed professionals
- Increase availability of counseling services at all levels
- Develop programs that use working professionals and graduates as mentors, advisors, role models and volunteer recruiters
- Develop brochures and other print materials for specific audiences and professions
- Increase parent/family education through involvement in student's exploration of career opportunities and by building continuing support networks among family and community groups
- Make better use of innovative technology, television and public service announcements
- Disseminate career information at an early age using more than lecture and print materials
- Undertake curriculum infusion to highlight career opportunities, thereby increasing student awareness and aspirations
- Increase use of minority role models to deliver career information
- Involve more licensed professionals in regional activities

ATTITUDES

- Design inservice programs and curriculum to develop positive attitudes toward minorities
- Develop and use more materials on minority roles in history and accomplishments of minorities
- Develop networks and support groups to promote intercultural values
- Design curriculum and programs to motivate students and develop a positive self-image
- Develop active outreach programs for guidance and recruitment of minorities

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

- Increase peer tutoring and other peer assistance programs
- Develop mentoring programs using older students, graduates and professionals
- Strengthen remedial and developmental programs at all levels to overcome requirement deficiencies
- Involve parents in student's course planning
- Develop more integrated curricula to better meet the math and science needs of non-Regents track students
- Design inservice programs and curriculum to increase student interest in math and science
- Examine the effects of normative grading procedures on achievement
- Use math-science specialists as reading specialists are currently used in developmental programs

INSTITUTIONS

- Design inservice education for teachers and counselors on career education and minority student needs
- Recruit more minority faculty and staff
- Use graduates and athletes as recruiters and mentors
- Support remedial and literacy programs for adults
- Provide administrative services and alternate program options to help adults enter career programs
- Offer an "orientation to college" course for credit that helps students negotiate the system successfully
- Promote articulation between secondary and postsecondary levels to increase student networking and smooth transitions between levels
- Promote faculty-student mentoring, advising and tutoring arrangements
- Coordinate placement services among colleges and employment agencies toward more effective services for minority graduates
- Increase availability of internships and other hands-on experiences
- Use minority college students, alumni and parents as role models in recruitment

COMMUNITY

- Involve business and industry in career guidance and promotional activities
- Improve public transportation to educational agencies
- Compile directories of sources of career information and program aid from community organizations
- Foster job development and networking among minority graduates
- Develop volunteers from community groups, such as tutors and mentors
- Establish self-help groups in schools and community agencies
- Develop networks and cooperation among state agencies, community groups, business and industry, professional and educational agencies
- Form consortia of educational institutions and related agencies in regions to address minority issues

STATE

- Establish a clearinghouse to disseminate information on services and agencies that address minority access problems and issues
- Study retention of minorities in the various professions to determine barriers to success subsequent to formal education
- Urge the appointment of a minority education coordinator in each school and college
- Make special funding incentives available for minority students
- Develop special scholarships and other financial aid programs for licensed professions
- Research and disseminate model programs from across the nation
- Increase funding for local school activities that support activities related to minority access
- Promote curriculum development (K-12) to update and include accomplishments of minority groups
- Examine allocation patterns for EOP programs for parity between two-year and four-year colleges
- Develop an external appeal process beyond the campus for discrimination issues
- Allocate funds specifically to reduce class size and provide targeted funding for support services and remediation programs
- Continue efforts to increase minimum levels of skill competencies through performance requirements, institutional follow-up, accreditation criteria and student funding practices
- Clarify appeal processes available to students in such instances as inappropriate assessment of deficiencies and grading discrepancies

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

A document such as this that attempts to summarize outcomes from five different conferences runs the risk of understating the importance that was attached to certain recommendations at a particular regional level. For example, concern for appropriate representation and involvement by the Native American population was expressed by some regions but the references to the specific subgroups are masked in this summary. Also, most conference participants were from urban or suburban areas which may have resulted in an underrepresentation of issues and concerns from rural areas. Readers interested in more detailed recommendations of any particular region are referred to the proceedings document from that regional conference.

Across regions many recommendations had a common thread or similarity of response to a generally perceived need. A theme heard repeatedly across the state was for more accurate and effective career information materials and services of all kinds and at all levels. Another was the call for more active involvement of role models, educators and licensed professionals, who are members of minority groups. Role models are perceived to be needed as career spokespersons, regional committee members, student mentors and tutors, inservice trainers and educational advisors at all levels.

Inservice education for counselors and faculty was also a common recommendation; topics ranged from basic career information to helping students build a more positive self-image. Inservice was also viewed as a basic strategy to address staff attitudes and sensitivity to minority concerns.

Another common thread running through the conferences was the need for curriculum development to portray a more accurate picture of ethnic groups in history and their contributions to society. Curriculum development was also needed in math and science areas and remedial programs to help students acquire academic skills needed to enter professional programs.

During the life of the project several developments have occurred at the state level that address, in part, an often stated need for more financial support for students and programs leading to the professions. As the conferences were being held, new state legislation began several programs important to increasing minority access to the professions:

> Science and Technology Entry Program (STEP) - grants to institutions to assist underrepresented minority or disadvantaged secondary school students in acquiring the prerequisite skills necessary to pursue preprofessional or professional programs of study in scientific, health and health-related fields.
>
> Regents Health Care and Professional Opportunity Scholarship Programs - awards for minority and disadvantaged students beginning or engaged in approved programs in medicine or dentistry or other approved programs leading to a degree in a profession licensed by the Board of Regents.

Grant funds available to institutions under the Economic Security Act are being used to foster improved teaching in math and science which should result in increased student retention in those programs basic to professional licensure. Also secondary and postsecondary agencies can apply portions of their Perkins Act allocation to programs that directly serve disadvantaged and minority students.

In total these funding sources comprise a significant policy level response that was not present when the project began. But it is not money alone that the field seeks from the policy level. Other recommendations seek state-level leadership in providing curriculum development, information dissemination, inservice education, and interagency cooperation.

One of the most important results of the series of conferences is the cadre of dedicated professionals who comprise the five regional planning committees, and who continue to serve as members of a task force in each region to implement selected recommendations with project assistance. They represent a range of regional agencies, and through them, the level of cooperation is increasing. Another related outcome is the list of professionals and educators who, as a result of the conferences, indicated their willingness to work with the regional task force members as recommendations are translated into local and regional activities. Many of these individuals as teachers, role models, counselors, and professionals, will become part of the solution to increasing minority access in their particular regions.

All educators and professionals involved in the project realize that the problem of underrepresentation of minorities requires long-term commitment and continuing programmatic actions at all levels. An important step has been taken at the two-year college level. The work that remains is to expand and institutionalize programs and services that promote access of minorities to the licensed professions and to higher education in general.

Finally, it is important to note that there is general agreement between the issues and recommendations that came from the conferences and those outlined in the **Regents Plan for the Development of Postsecondary Education in New York State**, 1984. In 1986 postsecondary institutions will be asked to report on progress made in minority student participation and other access-related goals. The conference outcomes provide a validated list of directions for institutions to follow as they seek to improve minority access.

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